

Commute Trip Reduction
Frequently Asked Questions
City of Bellevue
Updated January 2026

What is Commute Trip Reduction (CTR)?

Washington's CTR Law ([RCW 70.94.527](#)), adopted by the legislature in 1991 and revised in 2006, is incorporated into the Washington Clean Air Act. Its purpose is to improve air quality, reduce traffic congestion and minimize energy consumption by encouraging people to utilize ways to get to work other than driving alone.

The law requires affected employers in the most congested areas of the state to promote commute alternatives such as transit, carpool, vanpool, bicycling, walking, working from home, compressed work weeks and flexible work schedules. It also requires jurisdictions to work toward trip reduction targets and coordinate with regional governments.

Why should people care about CTR?

Wherever congestion occurs, the delay in employee productivity and freight delivery translates to lost money. Washington's economic vitality depends on personal mobility and the efficient movement of goods and materials. Reducing the proportion of single-occupant vehicles and number of vehicle miles traveled increases the efficiency of our roadway space.

Since the beginning of Bellevue's CTR program in 1993, citywide CTR-affected worksites have reduced their drive-alone commute rates by 33 percentage points, from 76.1% to 43.1%. Bellevue's CTR-affected employers recorded an 18.7 percentage point reduction in driving alone from 1993 to 2021, representing approximately 3,100 vehicles removed from Bellevue roadways each day, leading to an annual reduction of over 5.2 million metric tons of CO2.

Which employers are affected by the state's CTR law?

The CTR law affects both public and private employers that have 100 or more full-time (35 hours or more per week) employees who: work at a single worksite located in one of the state's most congested corridors; and who begin work between 6 and 9 a.m. on two or more weekdays for at least 12 continuous months. More information can be found in [RCW 70.94.527](#)

The law applies in certain urban growth areas of the state with a state highway segment exceeding one hundred person hours of delay. Most jurisdictions in King County, including Bellevue, are required to implement the CTR law. Affected jurisdictions are required to pass a local CTR ordinance with specific requirements for that jurisdiction. Bellevue's city-specific CTR requirements are in [Chapter 14.40 of the Bellevue City Code](#).

What are the goals for CTR-affected employers?

Every two years affected employers use a state-supplied survey to ask employees how they get to work, how many miles they travel to work and other questions about their commute habits. The survey results are used to measure the employers' progress against assigned baseline values (the baseline year is 2008 or the year they became affected, whichever is later) for non-drive-alone rate and vehicle miles traveled (VMT). If an employer meets either the non-drive-alone rate or VMT goal, it is considered to have made goal. The goals are 16.3% increase in non-drive-alone rate and 18% reduction in VMT after four years.

What are employers required to do under the CTR law?

An affected employer must make a good-faith effort to develop and implement a CTR program. This means, at minimum, doing the following:

- Designating an employee transportation coordinator (ETC)
- Displaying the ETC's name and contact information where employees are likely to see it
- Distributing information to employees about commute alternatives to driving alone
- Implementing a set of measures geared toward achieving the CTR goals
- Surveying employees about their commuting habits every two years
- Reporting regularly about progress toward meeting CTR goals
- Adjusting their program elements/offerings if not making progress toward goal

How can employers encourage the use of commute alternatives to driving alone?

Under the CTR law, an employer must implement a program to reduce commute trips to the worksite. However, employee transportation coordinators are only limited by their imagination. Popular program elements include:

- Encouraging ridesharing by matching employees for carpools and vanpools
- Encouraging transit ridership by subsidizing passes or vanpool fares
- Allowing employees to work from home one or two days per week
- Implementing parking management programs that minimize drive-alone commuting by charging employees for parking, providing commuter parking on a daily basis and/or designating preferred parking for carpools and vanpools
- Installing showers, lockers and bicycle racks for bikers and walkers
- Offering flexible work schedules that allow people to alter their start and quit times in order to take advantage of alternative commute options
- Setting up company-wide trip logging/reward networks (for instance, on www.RideshareOnline.com)

What if an employer doesn't comply with CTR requirements or meet its CTR goal? The CTR goals are just that, goals. If the employer is making a good-faith effort to implement its CTR program, it cannot be penalized for failure to meet the CTR goals. Employers that don't make progress will be asked by their city or county to revise their programs to make them more effective.

Cities and counties are there to work with employers to create successful programs, not to penalize employers who don't succeed. However, civil penalties may be assessed for failing to meet the minimum requirements described above or making a good faith effort to comply with the requirements of the law.

The city may issue a notice of civil violation and may impose monetary penalties in the manner set forth in Chapter 1.18 BCC for any civil violation committed by an employer (14.40.110(C)); provided than any monetary penalty imposed shall not exceed \$250.00 per day for each violation and that no monetary penalties, shall accrue subsequent to the filing of an appeal by an employer of such notice of civil violation. Each day of failure to implement the program shall constitute a separate violation, subject to penalties as described in RCW 7.80.

What other states have a CTR-type law?

California, Arizona, Wisconsin, Texas, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Illinois all have CTR-type laws in place for regions within their states.